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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8365  
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE  
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RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/OSD WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//JF/UNMA//  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC//J3//  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RUMICEA/JICCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RHMFIUU/COMSOCCENT MACDILL AFB FL  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2249  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 2459  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 5551  
RUEHUNV/USMISSION UNVIE VIENNA 1093

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KABUL 000693

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/FO (AMB QUINN), SA/A, S/CT, EUR/RPM  
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR AID/ANE, AID/DCHA/DG  
NSC FOR AHARRIMAN, KAMEND  
CENTCOM FOR CG CFC-A, CG CJTF-76, POLAD  
REL NATO/AUST/NZ/ISAF

E.O. 12958 N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [EID](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: PRT/LASHKAR GAH - HELMAND: SAID ABAD SCHOOL  
NOT INTIMIDATED

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¶1. (SBU) Summary: School officials in Said Abad told PRToffs on February 11 that despite threats from "those opposed to education" they were determined to keep the co-educational school open. According to the provincial education office, over the past 16 months 18 schools throughout Helmand Province have been burned; 66 (about 25 percent) are currently closed.

¶2. (SBU) The PRT visited Said Abad school to discuss upcoming construction of a security wall around the school's perimeter. The school is located in southern Nad Ali district, about 30 kilometers southwest of Lashkar Gah. Built about three years ago with United Nations support, the school has about 900 students, 40 percent of whom are girls. Most students are of the Hazara ethnic minority, which views education as a top priority. About 15 percent are Pashtun. No Pashtun girls attend the school, however, which goes up to grade 10.

¶3. (SBU) Officials said that, over the past six months, "anti-education elements" have threatened the headmaster, Assadullah Karima, a number of times. On several occasions, they even drove up to the school during the day. (Note: Normally, most intimidation takes the form of "night letters," warning officials and teachers to stay away from school. End Note.)

¶4. (SBU) Assadullah said that the school was grateful for the PRT's attention and its support for the perimeter security wall, which would send a signal to potential attackers as well as enhancing the school's overall security. One negative impact of the general deterioration of security is that teachers who were attending the Lashkar Gah teacher training college for recertification have been forced to stop due to the danger for women traveling on the road.

¶5. (SBU) Headmaster Assadullah said that he is very much looking forward to the UK and Afghan National Army deployment. He asked the PRT to ensure that the security forces appear at least monthly in the area. He vowed to keep the school open.

¶6. (SBU) In an impromptu discussion in a girls' ninth grade class, the students told PRToffs that they are grateful for the opportunity to attend school. During the Taliban times, students engaged in clandestine studies at home, a risky proposition. Despite the occasional threats, the girls said that they were hopeful that their education would continue. Several voiced ambitions to become engineers or doctors.

Comment

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¶7. (SBU) The atmosphere around the school was positive. Despite the modest building, which did not appear well constructed with only the most basic materials, students and staff were engaged. In the case of Said Abad, the community and school have

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come together to protect what they have achieved. It is likely that there are many schools facing the same threats as Said Abad. Whether they will be able to stand up to this increasing intimidation remains an open question.

¶8. (U) Dushanbe minimize considered.

NEUMANN